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CONTENTS

THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN RUSSIA

<i>Zaslavsky S. E.</i> Russian Party System: Current State and Dynamics of Development	261
<i>Monahov D. N., Pronchev G. B.</i> From a Digit to the Digital Society	277
<i>Abramova M. A., Goncharova G. S., Kostyuk V. G.</i> Theoretical Models of Ethnopolitics in Modern Russia	285

PROBLEMS OF EURASIAN AND POST-SOVIET COOPERATION

<i>Amiantov A. A., Grachev-Vorontsov A. V.</i> Trends in the Development of Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation (On the Example of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly)	293
<i>Ivanchenko V. S., Chimiris E. S.</i> Russian Language in the Post-Soviet Space as a Factor of Politics	305

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND WORLD POLITICS

<i>Khoperskaya L. L., Pshenichnaya N. Y.</i> Coronavirus: The Foreign Political Dimension	316
<i>Morozov I. L.</i> Legal Basis of State Management Decisions in the Field of Russia's Information Security: Politological Analysis	331
<i>Primova E. N.</i> On the Peculiarities of German Cooperative Federalism	339
<i>Yan Jie, Czin' Zhu.</i> Economic Interests of Russia and China in the Central Asian Region: Comparative Analysis	347

OUR AUTHORS	352
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AUTHORS' GUIDELINES	354
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FROM A DIGIT TO THE DIGITAL SOCIETY¹

The article analyzes the transition of humanity from using the simplest forms of presenting information to a digital society that uses modern social information and communication technologies, including social information networks, digital environment and digital education. Further development requires improvement of communication methods. At the same time, there are a number of problems in the use of digital technologies. The article is of interest to specialists dealing with the problems of sociology of education and sociology of global processes.

Key words: *digital society, digitalization, digital environment, information and communication technologies, digital education, online education.*

“Numbers rule the world!” wrote Pythagoras [17]. What is meant by this term? Counting has been known to people for a long time. The need to know the number of family members, the available number of livestock, products and grain determined the appearance of counting. A digit is only a sign for displaying numbers. Arabic numerals are a combination of 0 to 9. Roman numerals consist of seven characters. The number of digits is limited, combining them you can get a lot of numbers. In this case, different number systems are used. “Number system is a set of rules for writing numbers using a finite set of characters (digits)” [14].

Differences between numbers and digits:

- ability to perform various mathematical operations with numbers;
- existence of negative, fractional numbers;
- an infinite number of numbers.

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Traditionally, numbers were given a special role. For example, Orthodoxy refers to the “Holy Trinity,” while Islam is based on five “pillars.”

Numerology was part of the philosophy of Pythagoras and his followers. The sage associated the knowledge of the nature and meaning of numbers with the knowledge of the essence of phenomena and objects. Each category of being received a numerical property, including such phenomena as death, illness, suffering, and others. “To know the world is to know the numbers that govern it,” Pythagoras said [17].

A special role is given to the figures and in literature: “Music is a science which tells about the numbers that are in the sounds” (Flaccus Albinus Alcuin [17]).

“Adults are very fond of numbers. When you tell them that you have a new friend, they will never ask about the most important thing. They will never say: “What’s his voice like? What games does he like to play? Does he catch butterflies?” They ask: “How old is he? How many brothers does he have? How much does he weigh? How much does his father earn?” And then they imagine that they have learnt something about the person” (Antoine de Saint-Exupery “Little prince” [17]).

The evolution of information and communication technologies has led to the emergence of informatization and computerization of society [8. Pp. 1-10]. In recent years, the global social development has seen a qualitative increase in the efficiency of public life both on the scale of individual countries and the whole world [9. Pp. 200-208]. This was facilitated by a new trend based on the digital representation of information.

The forerunner of digital technology was analog technology. In terms of using digital technologies, analog information is encoded using a binary number system and then transmitted over communication channels in packets in the form of digital series and at the output it is again decoded into an analog system [5. Pp. 67-73].

Digitalization makes it possible to transmit information using various material media; allows you to encrypt messages, and then decrypt them again; allows copying and distributing information without loss of accuracy; increases the speed of transmission and density of information when writing [5. Pp. 67-73].

The development of such technologies began at the end of the XX century: digital telephony began to be introduced instead of analog networks; digital cameras and television appeared. “The theory and practice of modeling complex objects is also not a recent invention. But the joint development of these areas has led to the fact that we have learned to create fairly accurate and at the same time quite complex models. Modern computing capabilities make it possible not only to apply complex digital models, but also to do it online. Thus, the digits invade our daily life, modeling, calculating and radically changing it” [2].

Technological and economic evolutionary changes have led to the modification of the term “digital” and the emergence of consonant concepts such as “digitization,” “digital transformation,” etc.

Digitization (or “digitalization” in the narrow sense) is the translation of information into digital form, the use of information in digital form [2].

Digitalization is [3. P. 132]:

- digitization of information, resulting in lower costs and a number of practical (instrumental) opportunities to improve the efficiency of certain areas of activity;
- application for targeted solution of technological and/or business problems, saturation of production and business processes with digital tools.

In general, digitalization is the application of new methods of generating, processing, storing and transmitting information, as well as digital computer technologies in all spheres of public life.

Thus, digitalization is currently becoming an engine of global social development and improvement of the quality of life, one of the dominant trends in global development [15. Pp. 119-123; 16. Pp. 10839-10849].

Digital transformation is the application of new business models and economic forms that combine the digital and physical worlds, leading to new results; combining tools into digital platforms, and suppliers and consumers into ecosystems [2].

The prerequisite for digitalization at the state level is the globalization of all aspects of public life, including state, interstate, industry, household and citizen levels. The prerequisites for digitalization at the state level include the establishment of a single economic space and, on its basis, creation of new economic zones, the spread of mobile devices, and formation of extensive social networks. This, in turn, requires improvement of the legal framework.

The positive consequences of digitalization include:

- economic and social impact of technology;
- increasing level of information needs;
- improvement of the quality of public life at the expense of full satisfaction of the basic the newly emerging needs;
- improvement of the traditional and formation of a new information culture of the population;
- emergence of new forms of business activity leading to a greater competitiveness and national wealth;
- intellectualization (robotization) of social labor and increase of its productivity;
- increasing importance and share of artificial intelligence (not only in production) and emergence of human-replacing control systems;
- the dominant role of the unified information space in society;
- free access of every citizen to information that does not constitute a state secret and does not pose a threat to national security.

The modern society is being transformed under the influence of digital technologies. Currently, a digital society is being formed, the main characteristics of which are the dominance of network communications, which indefinitely expand the circle of contacts [11. Pp. 36-56].

The digital society is rethinking and transforming the traditional matrix of values, forming a new system of values. The dominant feature of this modification is the Internet information space. The subsequent values are freedom from censorship, absolute accessibility of content both in technical and semantic terms, the ability to save time and effort, and the speed of information exchange [13. Pp. 7-11].

Education in a digital society faces new challenges. The pedagogical community should develop new teaching methods and find a balance between digital and traditional education.

On the one hand, in the context of digitalization, it is easier to implement a personalized approach to students, taking into account the needs and characteristics of the individual, including children with special needs. The digital environment can create equal opportunities for all. But, as shown by distance learning (training on “remote”) in the context of the coronavirus pandemic – at the moment, technology, access to the network itself and online tools are not available to everyone and everywhere. This period also revealed a number of legal problems. By March – May of this year, the status of distance learning at school was not fixed in the Russian Federation, the Law “On education” only gives definitions of e-learning (EE) and distance learning technologies (DOT), there is no explanations of how to evaluate the “work” of students and teachers, and there are still no time standards for teachers and teaching staff of universities. “Standards and Regulations” (Sanpin) do not contain the norm for using computers, screens, etc in the classroom and the way of applying such norms in the situation when the entire educational process is transferred to a digital environment. After all, in practice, teachers, as a rule, used traditional face-to-face training (with the use of EO) and were not ready to use new technologies. As a result, children spent the whole day looking at the computer or gadget monitor, and the amount of homework increased.

Digital education will become effective and widespread only when it is protected by law, when the load standards for both teachers and students are developed; and teachers will have sufficient and necessary competencies to work in a digital environment.

Today, there are many digital educational solutions. On such platforms as “Enlightenment,” “Russian textbook,” Lecta and others you can find a list of textbooks and methodological materials approved by departments; on others, for example, NES (Russian electronic school), MES (Moscow electronic school), Yaklass, [Yandex.Textbook](#), [Yandex.Lessons](#) and [Obrazovarium](#) – quests for different classes. Such platforms as [Yandex.Tutor](#), NES, [Stemford](#) can be used in preparation for the Unified State Exam, and such as [Yandex.Teacher](#), NES, “Russian textbook”, Lecta” are aimed at educating teachers and parents... However, the totality of all educational needs is not yet provided by any resource.

The priority project “Modern digital educational environment in the Russian Federation” (2016-2021) launched a digital transformation in Russian educa-

tion. This project creates a set of conditions “for the systematic improvement of the quality and expansion of opportunities for continuing education for citizens through the development of the Russian digital educational space” [18].

In December 2017, the Digital School project was announced, within the framework of which the necessary infrastructure should be created in schools. This project is declared as a part of the project “Modern digital educational environment of the Russian Federation” [12].

Digital transformation leads to an update of the model of the educational process in schools (both secondary and higher) based on the use of modern digital technologies [1. Pp. 168-178; 10. Pp. 12-19]. However, the digital school does not provide for the exclusion of non-digital formats for teaching schoolchildren (students) [7. Pp. 1-9].

Before our eyes, a model of Blended Learning is emerging, in which, along with Face-To-Face Learning learning in the classroom, the audience uses a variety of computer equipment, mobile devices (mLearning), as well as network resources and virtual environment tools (eLearning).

Traditional face-to-face training is being transformed into e-learning, where modern information and communication technologies are aimed at enhancing educational visualization and information saturation of the educational process.

Digitalization transforms the role of a teacher from a translator of knowledge to a navigator of diverse educational content and a facilitator in working with a class (group). The next trend of digital transformation is the modification of traditional education into online education. Even now, you can see the expansion of the classroom to an infinite size due to online services. For example, using endless whiteboards for discussions or solving educational problems. They unite a huge number of students in one virtual classroom [12].

Digital transformation has influenced the traditional model of teacher-student educational interaction [4. Pp. 332-335]. Now there are “intermediaries”: personal computers and personal mobile gadgets. The development of online education has led to the situation when students of traditional universities (studying offline) at their own request supplement their education with online courses permitting them to study at any time and in any place. This became possible because there are many online platforms for creating such courses: “open education,” “Education in Russian,” “Universarium,” “Lectorium,” “University without borders,” “Open Polytechnic,” etc. [4. Pp. 332-335].

The main function of learning in the context of digital education is to “teach to learn,” to be ready for changes [6. Pp. 111-116].

We deal with an evolutionary change in the cultural space, including digital culture. A new type of culture is emerging, based on the previous achievements of the human mind.

This transformation in the information space will require serious financial and intellectual efforts in the education and upbringing of a person living in a new

(virtual) environment filled with new technical solutions and capabilities, while remaining a living person with all needs of the earth. At the same time, the so-called digital ecology that has already emerged will impose new responsibilities and requirements.

Life in a digital environment is new for humans because they physically feel surrounded by sources of information constantly reminding them of themselves. This is on the one hand. On the other hand, the person is the Creator of this information environment, its subject.

In this situation we can speak about the existence of such a phenomenon as psycho-ecology. The source of which is the digital ecology, where the person is surrounded by the information flows.

Digitalization of social spheres will exacerbate psychological problems. New civilizational and socio-technical conditions in the development of the society may create ambiguous reactions on the part of the people. Progress in the society and technology is connected with certain costs. However, progress is moving forward. The same can be said about the global digitalization of the information environment.

We have no doubt that this process will lead to breakthroughs in public life, in science, education, economy, medicine, culture, agriculture, construction, energy, transport and other spheres. Such digital transformation represents a shift in culture, human resources and technology driven by technological trends and modifications. Changes include advances in artificial intelligence, mobile devices, consumption, social media, and data storage capabilities.

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